

**Broadhempston School Life group – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (3.40pm – 4.50pm)**

**Attendees:** Nanya Coles (Chair), Karen Barlow (Academy Head), Emily Clements (Senior Teacher), Sue Cleverley (Teacher), Annabel White (Birch), Nick Wright (Sycamore), James Symons (Birch), Hannah Standing (Birch)

**Apologies:** Nick Kirsop-Taylor (Sycamore) Troy Wu (Birch)

**Agenda items** – focus is on the changes to the school from September 2025:

1. SLG ToR
2. Implementation
3. Physical space
4. Staff Support
5. Marketing of the school
6. Questions to pass onto the trust
7. AOB

**Minutes**

1. SLG ToR

**Question:**

**Perhaps the most common reflections we have had in recent weeks have been around the nature of communications and the partnership between the school/Trust SLG and the parenting-carer community. We are genuinely committed to this school and community, and want to know if there this marks the beginning of an ongoing and two-way discussion (through the life group or elsewhere) about the ‘big issues’ facing our school and how we can work in partnership to get the implementation right?**

**Going forwards, can you consider the frequency of SLG?**

- The school is committed to onward communication and will continue to communicate with parents directly. There are lessons to be learnt on communication and it has been fed back to the trust that this could have been improved. The staff were informed of the decision this year and only had a small amount of time to process the information before being shared with parents. The news has taken the staff by shock as well.
- The letters which have been sent out have been from the trust.
- School life group was an option from September but there was a lack of interest in this group. The School Life Group (SLG) will continue with the previous Terms of reference running 3-4 times per year. With an additional one taking place towards the end of this academic year. When these take place is open for discussion.
- The SLG is an opportunity to communicate between the school and parents.

2. Implementation

**Questions raised:**

**Will the new class structure influence anything else that we’ve not yet been informed about. For example, at the moment the younger children on a 1-night residential, how will this be managed?**

- The plan is for them to continue to be split – having two part time teachers may be able to help with this split. The close relationship with Landscope works well and combining trips that require larger numbers is beneficial for both schools. This also helps with the staffing ratios
- Forest school – this will continue to take place. They will all go together but there will be age appropriate activities for each. Team building and other activities might still be split. Some sports activities will be split by the age appropriateness depending on need.

**How will the transition years be managed/supported with the larger KS2 group?**

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This will be maintained in the same way as it currently is.</li> </ul> <p><b>The new system is going to take time to settle into for both teachers and pupils. This year, the first few weeks of the were very busy with trips, swimming, arts weeks etc. Would it be possible to give everyone time to settle into a new routine by simplifying the first term?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swimming is booked in and will be run slightly differently based on need. Last year the children were assessed on ability to meet the swimming standard. The school has assessed pupils and will be taking those in year 3, 4 and some year 5 – it will be less that half the class.</li> <li>The teachers feel that they like doing lots of different activities and it is normal doing these activities. This will be reviewed and adapted as it goes and if it isn't working they will be able to respond.</li> <li>Still working on the 4 year rolling programme</li> </ul> <p><b>We appreciate Ms Barlow's position, honesty about the situation and candour. We also appreciate the Trust's recent letter about the details of implementation. Can we be assured from these that the 60% of their time spent on a split KS2 class will prioritise, as much as possible, the core curriculum subjects of English, Maths and the Sciences?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is actually around 57% with the current timetable plans and it will prioritise maths and science. KB will teach an additional afternoon to be able to split science. Spanish and computing will also be split. Music will be split because this alternates with Spanish. These splits have been based on ability to teach the curriculum well across ages.</li> <li>PE will be split – this is funded by the sports grant and Mr Tanner can be maintained for the whole day (normally for 2 classes this would be reduced). KB will teach PE on the other days so that science can be taught separately. This will mean that KB is able to take the children on sports activities and days away which will leave the teachers free to stay in school teaching.</li> <li>English will be taught together – KB has spoken to other schools within the trust and other schools nationally. Claire Appleby is the English lead for the trust and will come in in June to work through how this works. Drakes is currently working towards outstanding operating this class structure. Grammar and guided reading might be mixed ability.</li> </ul> <p><b>How far have things come with considering how all four year groups will get the curriculum access relevant to them?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rolling programmes are moving to 4 years and this is currently being planned out. There is a progression of skills and the school are looking at all the topics – the expectation is different for the different stages. Some providers of packages/schemes of work are staying the same but some are changing such as history and geography</li> <li>This is the same approach that is being used in class 1 at the moment, where the curriculum is taught across two key stages - EYFS and KS1.</li> <li>There is potential for independence – older children taking responsibility for their learning. Positive with having a job share is that the subjects will be split across the teachers. Will focus on some of the subjects that are for the whole class and thought can be put into this. It will be useful to have ongoing projects and there is lots of potential for being creative.</li> </ul> <p><b>How many children will be in KS2 &amp; KS1 classes?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>27 in KS2, 16 KS1 and EYFS</li> </ul> |
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|                   | <p><b>With the reduction in staffing, how will the needs of all pupils continue to be met? Including staffing for interventions? And how to ensure all pupils are challenged effectively including those achieving Age Related Expectations (in the middle)?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenge will stay the same – there are 3 adults for the class of 27 and this is still a good proportion for the adult:child ratio – needs will continue to be managed well.</li> </ul> <p><b>What is the maximum number of children in KS2 class?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the numbers were going up lots then this would be something that would be reviewed</li> <li>There are minimum space allocations for pupils alongside teaching considerations</li> </ul>  |
| 3. Physical space | <p><b>Have you considered keeping the current room layout, with a TA based in each room and the teacher moving between the two rooms as needed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We don't think this would be practical. The teachers are responsible for the main teaching input and the TAs will be supporting the learning as they do now. We want the teaching to remain teacher led. In maths there would be some splitting of the classroom with some upstairs and downstairs. Would also like the class to feel like they are one class rather than being split physically all the time. This will lead to some cohesion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Is there an upper limit for the number of children in the new class? Is there a physical/teaching space if another child wants to join the school in year three+ ?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space wise we think that 37 could fit within the extended space. Previously were 31 in the current space, but as above there would be other teaching considerations that would need to be incorporated into any plans.</li> </ul> <p><b>We understand that the new classroom will be created by removing the cloakroom/library area upstairs. We've heard that this was originally done in part to help reduce noise travelling between upstairs and downstairs spaces. Is the building work going to impact the noise between classrooms?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This will not be an open space, the walls will be moved to form a larger room so no additional noise will travel upstairs that doesn't currently.</li> <li>The quotes have gone out for builders and one has been accepted</li> </ul> <p><b>Ms Barlow indicated at the meeting that the two classes will be separated 60% of the time. How will the classrooms be used when the years 3/4 and 5/6 are being taught separately? And will building work leave two good functional classrooms to enable two separate learning spaces?</b></p> <p><b>What exciting plans are being considered for how the now 'spare' classroom? Intervention space, library?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The downstairs classroom will be kept as a classroom which will mean that when needed, the class can split, this will also be useful for art or DT. It will be a breakout space. It will also still be being used as a classroom if two subjects are being taught at the same.</li> </ul> |

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|                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library will be moved downstairs and there will be an additional intervention room/breakout room where the library currently is.</li> </ul> <p><b>Are there any plans for refreshing the playground?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The playground will be being refreshed and the PTFA are working through this. There are no plans to refresh the smaller playground at the moment</li> </ul>   |
| 4. Staff Support                    | <p><b>How are teachers being supported to learn more about the best strategies for teaching cross key stage classes?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers will be visiting other schools to see how it is done and where it works well. Teachers feel that pupils need to be able to access the work that they are given and that this won't change and is the underlying principle for how they currently teach. The planning will be more and the staff are being supported with this, with KB taking on some of this and working with subject leads at Landscope.</li> <li>The English lead will be sharing their views</li> <li>The planning takes more time and will need to think about this in a different way</li> <li>Helpful that the staff know the children well throughout the school</li> <li>Staff said that they feel positive about the implementation of the new school structure and are enthusiastic about it</li> </ul> <p><b>Is there a risk that teachers can be burnt out?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a risk and we are aware of this. The teachers are supportive of each other. Sharing of the workload and Landscope staff and subject leadership sharing. They are reviewing the workload and streamlining things that are non-essential. Bought schemes of work and Tapestry for evidence rather than all being paper based and using the schemes as a starting point.</li> <li>The teachers said that although there will be more books to mark, that they were feeling positive about the changes and that they feel the school is in a good position.</li> </ul> |
| 5. Marketing of the school          | <p><b>What are the plans for parents to support the school in improving the marketing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a plan to run a meeting or Teams group to discuss the marketing in the next half term</li> </ul> <p><b>Can you share the information of what has been done in the past?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KB will share the details of what has been done before such as flyer drops etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>A pre-school would help to increase the numbers, is this possible?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been re-raised with the trust recently to look into this again. NC to check in with MM for an update on progress</li> <li>EC is planning time in with the baby group to visit.</li> </ul>  |
| 6. Questions to pass onto the trust | <p><b>What would the numbers need to be to increase to 3 classes in the future?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The letter that MM sent said there would need to be at least 65</li> </ul>  |

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|  | <p><b>What would the pupil numbers need to go below for the school to close?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KB stated that it is not that easy for a school to close - we have schools in the Trust that have really low numbers and closure has not been considered</li> </ul> <p><b>Has the trust applied for grants such as the reaching communities Lottery fund?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school already receives a small school grant and the trust applies for various grants available to it as an organisation. Not all grants will be available to an academy but can be applied for by the PTFA. The school would be happy to support with information required to apply for any additional grants</li> </ul> <p><b>What additional funding would be needed to add 0.2 of a substitute teacher to aide transition to the new class structure?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KB and teachers stated that they were not sure how useful or practicable this would be, as it would take time to build relationships which is not easy on 1 day a week and the standard of the education might not be delivered to the same standard</li> </ul> <p><b>Were these changes delayed until after Ofsted had been?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, some of the schools having the changes are expecting OFSTED</li> </ul> <p><b>Considering the financial situation in the trust, what alternatives to appointing a full time CEO were considered? And what alternative recruitment strategies, such as temporary internal secondment, split roles etc were ?</b></p> <p><b>Response from the Trustees:</b><br/> Before commencing the recruitment of a new CEO, detailed and thoughtful discussions were held, including consideration of a range of recruitment strategies and the most appropriate structure for the Trust moving forward. It was widely acknowledged that appointing a CEO is unlike standard recruitment—it demands a distinct and rigorous approach, underpinned by comprehensive due diligence. Given the significance of the CEO role, which influences every level of our schools and is instrumental in shaping the culture, expectations, and wellbeing across the Trust, we recognised the importance of casting the net widely and not limiting ourselves to internal candidates alone.</p> <p>Taking expert advice from both within and outside the organisation, we made a deliberate decision to open the search to both internal and external candidates, ensuring we accessed the broadest and most capable pool possible. The recruitment process was designed to be robust, fair, and inclusive, with multiple stakeholders involved at key stages. This diversity of input ensured a range of perspectives were considered and helped us to identify candidates whose values closely align with those of the Trust. As Trustees, we are acutely aware of the profound impact the CEO has on our children, staff, and families across all the Link schools, and we owed it to every one of them to leave no stone unturned in our search for the very best. We are confident that the process we undertook was exceptionally thorough and reflective of our responsibility to secure outstanding leadership for the future of the Trust.</p> |
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| 7. AOB | Background info – info couldn't be released until April due to the publication of admission numbers. |
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